

## INDIANA TO THE FORE.

Hon. Jesse Overstreet and the National Battle-Ground Rapid Strides of a Brilliant Young Hoosier to the Center of the Political Stage.

It is no small achievement in this day of strenuous competition and intense rivalries for a young man to reach the plane of national party leadership within a service of but three terms in Congress. The baton of political power and prestige is usually awarded only after many years of faithful labor in the ranks, and even then liberal commissions can be won by only a chosen few. But defying precedents and casting aside traditions, the Hon. Jesse Overstreet, through superior talent as an organizer and economist, to-day occupies a most conspicuous place at the table whenever the commanding geniuses of republicanism are called into council. It is the legitimate outcome of opportunities grasped and duty conscientiously performed, and



HON. JESSE OVERSTREET.

these are unfailing agencies in neutralizing all possible objections that frequently arise from the youth of the aspirant. Jesse Overstreet is from Indiana, and represents in Congress the famous Seventh District, the seat of the wealth, commercial development, and the progressive spirit of the State. Marion County sets the pace, and the man who essays to be the trustee for her interests in the national legislature must be possessed of a masterful equipment in intellect and measure up to the most profound statesmanship of the times.

In the decisive struggle this fall, where the foes of our beneficent protective system, business prosperity, and the rights of wage earners are drawn up, armed to the teeth, all eyes instinctively turn to Indiana, and especially to the brilliant chieftain whose own candidacy for reelection is made an additional subject of interest because he is secretary of the Republican National Congressional Campaign Committee. To the efforts of Mr. Overstreet and his able colleagues very largely depends the salvation of the next House of Representatives to the Republican party and with it the continuation of our matchless era of "good times" built up by a wise and confidence-inspiring tariff law. Now that the once-absorbing money issue has been practically settled, the preservation of our sound economic system is shifted to the debatable States of the great Northwest, and Indiana logically becomes the key to a momentous situation. Since the historic campaign of 1876, when the hosts of Democracy reached their high-water mark under the leadership of such astute political generals as Thomas A. Hendricks, Joseph E. McDonald, and Daniel W. Voorhees, the old Hoosierland has divided honors with New York as the most significant of the pivotal States, and in every contest on national lines her soil has been conceded to be the battle ground.

When the Democracy cut loose from her once-boasted moorings of sound finance and endeavored to infuse into the veins of loyal Indians the free silver virus and the madness of fiat coinage by a hypodermic injection of Bryanism, an issue was presented which, to combat successfully, called for the highest quality of statescraft, as the promoters of the new policy were alert, adroit, and persistent. Most active among the younger men who thrust their lives and budding fortunes into the breach at this critical juncture was Jesse Overstreet, then a promising attorney in the city of Franklin, Johnson County. He was valiant, ambitious, and capable, and had imbibed the true essence of Republicanism from the teachings of such sterling advocates as Henry S. Lane, Oliver P. Morton, Richard W. Thompson, Thomas M. Brown, Benjamin Harrison, and showed rare executive possibilities in the political trenches with the later forces of Hoosierdom's forensic giants like James N. Huston, L. T. Michener, John C. New, Albert J. Beveridge, and Charles Warren Fairbanks.

Nothing daunted by the superior experience and apparently unlimited resources of the enemy, Mr. Overstreet joined with a galaxy of enthusiasts, and by a dash and brilliance peculiarly his own, coupled with a natural genius for handling large questions, he became the natural leader of the sound money movement in the State. He accepted the Congressional nomination, and overriding the most exasperating obstacle, achieved a glorious triumph in the struggle for the defense of the nation's integrity in 1895.

Mr. Overstreet's career in detail is of interest to every American youth as an object lesson in diligence and manly courage. He is "unto the manor born," as relates to Hoosierdom, having been ushered into existence in 1859 in Franklin, which, until his removal six years ago to Indianapolis, was his home and the scene of his early endeavors. He received a common school and collegiate education, and was admitted to the bar in 1886. He was elected to the Fifty-fourth Congress in 1894, and has been re-elected to each subsequent Congress, increased majorities evidencing his firm hold upon the confidence and respect of the people who were proud to be his constituents.

Mr. Overstreet's career in Congress has been a source of gratification to his friends, and his wider field for action has developed a grade of abilities not previously understood, even by his intimate acquaintances. Nothing was too difficult for him to attempt a solution, and his inherent sagacity and unceasing industry soon indicated to the observing ones that a "new Richmond" had entered the field to stay. He is a close student of political economy, and there is no member of the House who is in command of a readier fund of information upon financial problems than he. This made him the established champion of the gold standard principle, and pushed to a successful passage the monetary reform bill which is now the legal safeguard of the nation against all encroachments of the free coinage fallacy. It is a law upon which the Republicans can go to the people and set it forth as a sufficient guarantee that our credit is "gilt-edged" in any quarter of the globe. The versatile Indian has made a number of speeches upon this and kindred subjects, and upon each occasion he has added to the favorable impression created in his first term, holding the attention and evoking the applause of the ablest veterans in congressional debate. On the tariff issue he is of a conservative adjustment of schedules that will afford the necessary protection to American manufacturers and at the same time prevent a dangerous competition of foreign cheap labor which would lead to a reduction in the present generous rewards of honest toil. He is opposed to an agitation that would unsettle prosperous business conditions and drive capital into hiding. He is against unlawful combinations that squeeze the people, but believes that due encouragement should be granted to corporations that benefit the country and by large investments lessen the cost of production, bringing commodities within the reach of the masses at lower rates. The tariff, as he understands it, is a broad question, and should be handled in the light of experience rather than to please impractical theorists and economic dreamers. A step toward free trade is a menace to both capital and labor, and changes in schedules should not at any point threaten the Republican idea of protection. This position ought to satisfy

the most captious that Mr. Overstreet is a safe counselor.

Jesse Overstreet's record as a friend and champion of the Negro is as sound, clean, and conspicuous as his record on the money and tariff questions. Coming, as he does, from the Seventh District of Indiana, where liberality of thought and respect for the constitutional rights of all citizens is a cardinal principle, he has been thoroughly impregnated with a feeling of brotherhood and sympathy for a black man who is persecuted or ostracized merely because of the accident of color. He has carefully studied the race question in its various phases, and by a commendable breadth of judgment has found that the Negro people, like all others, have good and bad within their ranks. He has been brought into contact with all classes of us, and is too manly to measure the race's status by its lower elements, granting to each individual that degree of credit which his intellect and character gives him warrant to claim.

While a member of the committee on elections in the Fifty-fourth Congress Mr. Overstreet had charge of the case of Hon. G. W. Murray, the colored contestant for a seat from South Carolina. He managed the matter with the skill of a trained diplomat and succeeded in placing Mr. Murray into the place, the lawful majority of the people of his district had chosen him to fill. He has been ever mindful of the interests of his own constituents in Indiana. His splendid work in the campaign of 1896 and 1900 won for him a vast influence with the administration of the late President McKinley. One of the first notable appointments made after McKinley's accession was that of Dr. S. A. Elbert, who was at the instance of Mr. Overstreet, tendered the very desirable consulship at Bahia, Brazil. The doctor did not take the place, but the plucky Congressman held to his appointment, and secured the assignment for one of the brightest and youngest scholars in Indiana, Dr. Henry W. Furniss, who is still serving at this post with credit and distinction. The victory was all the more significant from the fact that at the time Kentucky, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, West Virginia and the other battle grounds of the populous Ohio Valley had not been able to reach the patronage table. To-day no man in the country stands on a better footing with President Roosevelt than does Jesse Overstreet. As a secretary of the Congressional Campaign Committee a heavy responsibility rests upon his shoulders, and the President looks to him and his assistants to see that the voters are informed as to his real policies and purposes to the end that the administration may be properly sustained at the polls in November. He is a splendid officer, and past services have demonstrated that he is equal to all emergencies. He is infusing a much-needed vim and vigor into the contest just opened, and there is no doubt that a triumphant victory will crown his well-directed efforts.

At home he is having easy sailing. The voters, white and black, are a unit for him, and he is especially popular with the laboring masses, who recognize in him staunch friend—one who has exerted a great influence in cultivating more pleasing relations between the opposing forces in the mining regions. His constituents, one and all, understand the value of keeping good men in Congress, and realize that this is the only way to make themselves felt in the affairs of the nation. The electors of Marion County are alive to their own interests, and will take care that Mr. Overstreet's brilliant record is endorsed by rolling up for him the biggest majority that he has ever received.

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